



# Albert Einstein: The Scientist as Pacifist

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## Abstract

Dr. Albert Einstein, a German-born scientist and a Nobel Laureate, had gained distinction for his brilliant contribution to the field of theoretical physics, which had revolutionized the view of the universe. However, his concerns and activities were not limited to the scientific domain. Driven by the conviction that a scientist had social responsibility, the distinguished professor was drawn into the realm of world politics, evincing his grasp of the political issues and problems confronting the humanity during his lifetime and avowed commitment to the cause of peace. Owing to his pacifist orientation, he refused to sign the 1914 “Manifesto of the NinetyThree,” also known as the “Fulda Manifesto,” which served to justify the acts of German aggression. The illustrious scientist’s engagement in politics commenced in October 1914, two months after the outbreak of the First World War, when he signed the anti-war document entitled “Manifesto to the Europeans,” denouncing German militarism and calling for an end to the hostilities and peace in the European continent. From 1919 to 1932, Einstein did not hesitate to affiliate with pacifist organizations and preoccupied himself with writing articles on peace and disarmament. Following the ascendancy of the Nazis to power in 1933 up to 1945, he had abandoned his hardline fanatical stance, recognizing the necessity to resort to war and to deploy nuclear weapons as warranted by the prevailing historical circumstances. In the years after the Second World War until the last few days before his demise in 1955, Dr. Einstein reverted to his “militant pacifism.” This paper aims to trace the evolution of Dr. Einstein’s pacifism from the time the First World War broke out in 1914 to the signing of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto in 1955. Specifically, this historical account seeks to clarify his position on the menace of the First World War and militarism, Nazism and the threat posed by nuclear weapons. Drawing on the philosopher Bertrand Russell’s concept of “relative political pacifism,” the writer maintains that Dr. Einstein, taking cognizance of the stark historical realities of his time, changed his position in the 1930s and conceded that the recourse to war was permissible under certain conditions. Then, he went on to take a “militant” pacifist stance in the 1940s and the 1950s if only to foster world peace. The writer employs the historical method, that is, the descriptive-analytical method.

## Keywords

Albert Einstein, Politics, Militarism